

City of Austin Board and Care Home Initiative

I. Draft Definition:

A “Board and Care Home” means an establishment that:

- furnishes, in one or more dwelling units at a site, lodging to more than six and no more than 16 elderly and/or disabled persons who are unrelated to the owner/operator of the establishment by blood or marriage; and provides for lodgers one or more services such as; community meals, light housework, meal preparation, transportation, grocery shopping, money management, laundry services, or assistance with self-administration of medication, but does not provide personal care services to those persons.

II. Voluntary Registration:

Establishing a voluntary registration of all Board and Care Homes. Board and Care Homes would have the following options:

- Obtain a license as a “Boarding Home” or “Rooming House” from Code Compliance Department under Ch. 25-12-213 of the City Code.
- Register as a Board and Care Home with HHSD

Followed by development of a voluntary certification program for registered homes that meet select operational standards and maintain good standing based on established criteria.

III. Evaluation Project, Data Gathering:

EMS has been working to compile data to better identify these homes.

The criteria used by EMS to establish this new data are listed below:

- Single Family Residences
- Three or more unrelated persons living at the address
- Three or more emergency responses to the address in the last month

IV. Reasonable Accommodations:

It will be in the best interests of the city, the residents of these homes, the operators, and the general public to grant reasonable accommodations to owner/operators to prevent the unnecessary closure and to promote integration of well operated board and care homes throughout the community.

Proposed Process:

When a Board and Care Home owner/operator applies for an operating license from the Code Compliance Department or applies for the Board and Care Home registry with HHSD, the applicant may apply for “reasonable accommodations” by filing a request with the City Clerk’s office.

- A panel composed of a representative from Health, Fire, Code and/or Building Inspections will review the application.
- An initial site visit to assess the property may be required.
- Applicants denied accommodation may appeal the denial.

Advantages of the Current Proposal for Board and Care Homes:

Neighborhood Groups -

- Provides a single point of contact for concerns regarding boarding home issues.
- Provides ongoing data collection of operating boarding homes and responsible parties.

Boarding home Operators -

- Provides a path to operation in compliance with City of Austin Codes.
- Little or no cost to register home with HHSD.
- Provides potential opportunities for additional trainings and certification.

Social Service Agencies -

- Prevents boarding homes from unnecessary closure and loss of services.
- Potential for developing partnership with the City and HHSD and increase of services to residents.

Boarding Home Residents -

- Potential for increase of services provided to residents.
- Holds operators accountable for services and care of the residents.